




# Distributive Justice Development



Development in the considerations children use in dividing up a limited set of resources (e.g., candy, leadership opportunities, time with a recreational activity, etc.)

Who should get what?



# Developmental Trends

- 0A – Distribution based on wishes or desires (Whoever wants more should have more)
- 0B – Distribution based on observable realities (e.g. gender, height, etc.) which are used more as self serving justifications
- 1A – Distribution based on strict equality with out considering much else (e.g., who contributed, how much etc.) Everyone gets the same.
- 1B – Distributions based on equality that includes behavioral inputs (e.g., what someone has contributed to the project, how much work they actually did )




# Developmental Trends

2A – Considerations go beyond behavioral inputs and other factors (e.g., effort, need and ability) are also considered. Distributions are equitable – For instance two people should receive the same benefit even though what they put into a project were different – because of effort, need etc.

2B – In addition to the above gains, children begin to consider the circumstances that brought them to divide up goods, resources etc. in the first place, and also use this as a basis for deciding who gets what

# Sample Distributive Justice Dilemma





# Sample Distributive Justice Dilemma

A group of kids from the same neighborhood decide to help an elderly neighbor clean out her garage. The elderly neighbor, Mrs. Jones rewards the kids by giving them \$32.00 once they are finished. The kids have to decide the best way to divide up the money. Four kids are involved.



# Distributive Justice Dilemma continued

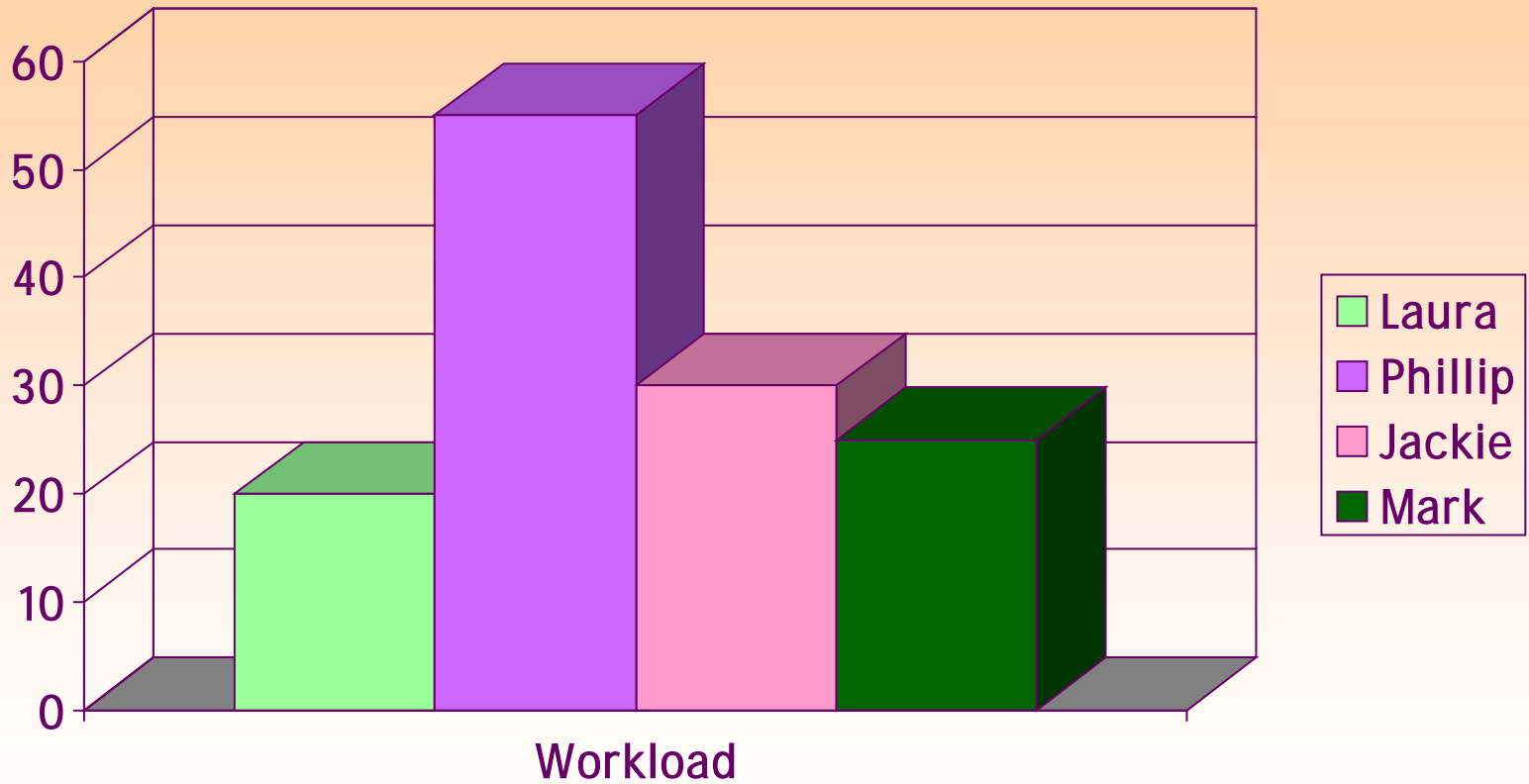
First there is Laura. Laura is 6 years old and worked as hard as she could because she knew Mrs. Jones wanted to have a clean garage. Laura didn't do as much of the work as the other kids though. She is young and couldn't lift and put away items as quickly.

Second, there is Phillip. Phillip is 10 years old and did a lot of the work. He is strong and can work real fast.

Jackie, who is 9 years old also helped. She did more of the work than Laura, but not as much as Phillip. Jackie didn't work as hard as she could though.

Mark, who is also 9 was the one Mrs. Jones asked for help in cleaning the garage in the first place. Mark thought it would be a good idea to ask his friends to join. Mark did almost as much work as Jackie.

# Breakdown of the work performed





# Sample Intervention

## Supporting Distributive Justice Development

# Decide what is the best way to divide up the money?

## But first, discuss the following questions

Should Laura get as much as Jackie?	Should Phillip get more than the others?	Should the kids who did more of the work, get more?
Should the older kids get more?	Should whoever needs the money the most get more?	Should the younger kids get more?
Should whoever wants the money the most get more?	Should Mark get the same as Jackie?	Should whoever tried harder get more?
Should Jackie get more than Mark?	Should they all get the same amount?	Should Laura get the same as Phillip?

Here is \$32.00. Now work together to divide the money up between the children.

Mark



Phillip



Jackie



Laura





# Ground Rules are Important

- It matters what everybody thinks
- Please share what you think
- Let everyone have their turn to say what they think
- Think carefully about what everyone has to say
- Not everyone has to feel the same
- It is O.K. and sometimes good to disagree
- Be polite in what you say about what other kids think



# How this works and why

1. Children are encouraged to work collaboratively and cordially to figure out the best answer.
2. Children compare and contrast different perspectives. As such, some ideas (e.g., older kids should get more than younger ones may seem less appealing weighed against questions that reflect equality or equity).
3. It is constructivist. Children are actively engaged in coming up with a solution, forming, using and developing their own ideas in the process.



# Practical Benefits

- Provides a model for children to recognize and negotiate what is fair in diverse situations
- Provides a guide for deciding upon in advance who should get what
- May help children reflect on and improve their own behavior
- Enhanced social skills

There are two boys in the fifth grade who don't get along. Joey sits in front of Mike in class who likes to pick on him. While the teacher talks, Mike will hit Joey on the back of the head, throw paper at him and try to trip him as he walks by. On the playground Mike when he can takes the ball away from Joey, and calls him names when other children are around. Joey told his teacher about this and his parents but nothing really changed except where they sit. Although Joey usually doesn't bother Mike, he is tired of being picked on. One day Joey gets a bunch of his friends together and starts making fun of Mike's mother, telling everyone that she is bald and that neighbors call her "egg-head." Mike gets really upset and yells at Joey to stop. Later that afternoon in class the students work on making their parents a card for Mother's/Parent's Day. Some of the kids in class start laughing about what Joey said about Mike's mother. Mike becomes upset, grabs Joey's card and tears it up. Joey then pushes Mike to the ground, tears up his Mother's Day card and the two begin fighting. The teacher breaks up the fight and sends both of them to the Principal's office.

Question: Should Joey and Mike receive the same punishment **OR** should Joey get a lesser punishment? *Before you decide think about your answers to the questions below.*

Didn't Joey make the situation worse by behaving as Mike did? Shouldn't he receive the same punishment then?	Should the fact that Mike was picking on Joey first matter?
Because they both broke the same rule of fighting, should they both get the same punishment?	Should the Principal consider that Joey did tell the teacher to try to get Mike to stop?
If Mike gets off easier, wouldn't other kids think it was O.K. to fight with someone they didn't like?	Should Mike get more of a punishment because Joey at first tried to do the right thing?
Should Joey have just waited for the teacher or his parents to take care of the problem?	Should Mike get more of a punishment because he was just being outright mean?
Should Joey have made more of an effort to get his teacher or parents to understand and do something about Mike bothering him?	Did Mike cause Joey to act the way he did?
If Joey expects to be treated differently from Mike, do you think it makes sense to act like Mike?	Should the fact that Joey acted out of frustration that Mike didn't stop bothering him be considered?
What did Joey do to make him get treated differently?	Do you think that Mike caused this situation to happen more than Joey?
Should the fact that Joey was teasing Mike's mother count against him?	Should Joey get off easier because the teacher didn't stop the situation?
How is the Principal going to know what happen before?	<b>What do you think children gain from doing this type of activity?</b>

## Moral Reasoning Development

- Reflects children's rationales about moral or character related actions
- The focus is on the considerations children use in moral decision making
- The focus is not on particular positions (e.g., one should or shouldn't receive the same punishment)

**Developmental Trends** - Upward trends towards using more higher stage reasoning with age

### Stage Model of Moral Reasoning (Levels and Stages)

**Pre-conventional Level Reasoning** – *children's ideas of right and wrong vary with the circumstances*

- Stage 1 – Ideas of right and wrong are based on obedience to authority figures and beliefs that wrong actions automatically lead to negative consequences
- Stage 1 ½ - Transitional stage where children become more tentative in the belief that wrong actions lead to negative consequences
- Stage 2 – Ideas of right and wrong are based on personal needs and outcomes; dog-eat-dog mindset
- Stage 2 ½ - Ideas of right and wrong are based on a “pre-golden” rule and personal feelings of guilt

**Conventional Level Reasoning** – *children ideas of right and wrong become more internalized and consistent; less variable; more principled*

- Stage 3 – Ideas of right and wrong are based in wanting to do what is expected of them by individuals they are close to and care about (e.g., friends and family); wanting to be good for goodness sake; wanting to be a good role occupant (e.g., student, friend, etc.); and the golden rule
- Stage 3 ½ - Ideas of right and wrong are based in notions of responsibility; there is more concern about what is the responsible course of action, opposed to just what is right; in thinking about what is responsible, courses of action are weighed in terms of their pros and cons, long-term and future consequences